

MATTERS RAISED WITH PERMISSION

Concern over the Rat-hole mining of coal in the Dima Hasao district of Assam

SHRI AJIT KUMAR BHUYAN (Assam): Thank you, Sir, for allowing me to raise a very important issue pertaining to Assam, namely, the issue of death of nine labourers working in an illegal rat-hole coal mine in Umrangso, Dima Hasao District in Assam.

(MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN *in the Chair.*)

This tragic incident is an example of how the State Government is compromising on the matter of environmental protection and jeopardising human lives. We all know that the National Green Tribunal had banned rat-hole mining, and the hon. Supreme Court had upheld it as such mining has adverse environmental consequences. A Commission headed by Justice (retired) B.P. Katakey, has also in its report pointed out way back in the year about rampant illegal coal mining in Assam. In spite of such conclusive evidence, the illegal mining is continuing in Assam just under the nose of State Government authorities. The incident in Umrangso is a reflection of the state of affairs in Assam. I want to draw the attention of this House to the fact that such illegal mining cannot continue unless there is some collusion with the State Government. Most of the newspapers are publishing stories about syndicate. Illegal mining, rat-hole mining, syndicate, all are interlinked and has patronage from highest echelons of the Government. Such illegal mining is causing loss to the exchequer and is also causing environmental degradation. I, therefore, demand immediate intervention of the Central Government on this issue as the State Government has miserably failed to discharge its duty. I also demand a high-level inquiry to find out the role of the State Government as well as that of the authorities of North Cachar Autonomous Council in Umrangso incident. Thank you, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The following hon. Members associated themselves with the matter raised by the hon. Member, Shri Ajit Kumar Bhuyan: Shri Manoj Kumar Jha (Bihar), Shri A. A. Rahim (Kerala), Dr. V. Sivadasan (Kerala), Shri R. Girirajan (Tamil Nadu), Dr. John Brittas (Kerala), Shrimati Priyanka Chaturvedi (Maharashtra), Shri M. Shanmugam (Tamil Nadu), Ms. Sushmita Dev (West Bengal), Shri M. Mohamed Abdulla (Tamil Nadu), Shri Saket Gokhale (West Bengal), Shri Javed Ali Khan, (Uttar Pradesh), Shri Niranjana Bishi (Odisha) and Shri Sandosh Kumar P (Kerala).